

Trope: Flower Shop AU (Hannigram AU)

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Summary

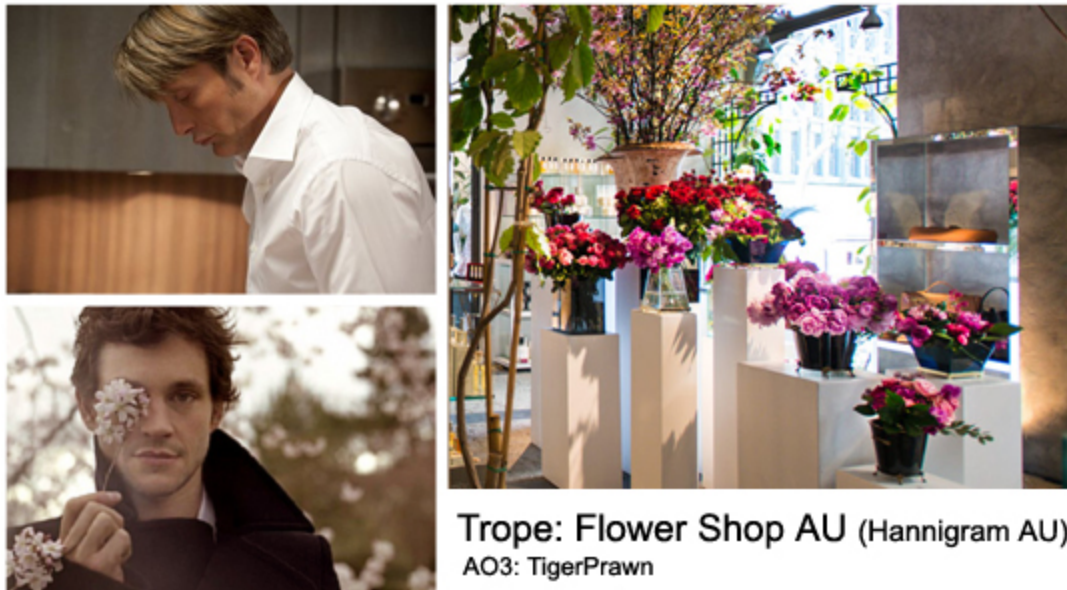
When surly cop Will Graham walks into Hannibal's flower shop, he wants to know the omega better. But with past issues and insecurities over how people treat someone who has transitioned from female omega to male omega, Will isn't going to be easily courted.

Notes

For #SummertimeSlick fest - Surprise Heat and Scenting
This is complete and posting weekly for the fest

NOTE: Re - Transgender character. I will be adding tags as I go, but just a heads up for potential triggers - Will has relationship insecurities because of his situation and how he has been treated in the past, and a fear of encountering transphobia. There is some mention of dysphoria and also non-graphic references to the surgeries Will has undergone. If any readers have specific concerns or have a comment on the tags, please let me know.

Chapter 1



Hannibal looked up as the bell above the door rang, the scent hitting him at the same moment he set eyes on his prospective customer.

There was eye contact for a brief moment, in which Hannibal gave a little nod of welcome, before the other man averted his eyes and hesitated before continuing into the shop. Curious. The man carried himself with confidence and yet seemed shy of, or perhaps put off by, the slight attention.

Hannibal went back to the arrangement he was preparing at the station next to the counter, letting the man browse quietly, but taking him in nonetheless. Taking in that interesting, and enticing scent. It was not often one met a male omega, at least one that didn't try to hide the fact with suppressants and scent blockers.

He'd had a few female omegan lovers in the past, though just as many - if not more - beta, male and female. The scent of either to his adept alpha nose, was not unpleasant. But this was something more unusual. Rich and earthy whilst being delicate, and fresh as a babbling stream. Something unique in the notes it left at the back of his throat. For the first time in his life he had to wonder at the idea of true mates, because nothing had before pulled within him so tightly on little more than a scent and a moment of eye contact.

Even as he smiled at his own ridiculousness, Hannibal kept a furtive watch on the customer until he picked one of the medium sized, pre-wrapped bouquets. He was studying thoughtfully, and with any other customer Hannibal would have gone over and offered assistance. But he found himself hanging back, taking pleasure in watching the man, wanting to see what he would do next with no interference.

The man was perhaps a little shorter than himself, curly wayward hair, and piercing eyes that swam between blue and green. In the past Hannibal had been with very high class men and

women, the kind he met in the social circles afforded to his wealth. All very prim and proper with a mutual appreciation of a finely turned out suit. So, it was a little surprising, he found, to be so very drawn to a man wearing worn corduroy pants and a flannel shirt and sporting at least a day's growth of stubble.

"Is something wrong?" The man's soft growl and annoyed expression alerted Hannibal to the fact that not only had he been looking the man up and down, but he had been caught in the act of it.

"Not at all, I was wondering if you require any assistance?" He replied in his cool tone, which earned him a frown of suspicion.

"Just these, thanks." The man brought the bouquet over and laid it on the counter his eyes cast down at them. Hannibal smiled, pleased to see he had chosen one of his special, stylised designs. Hannibal spent a lot of time on them, they were a tad more expensive than the run of the mill arrangements, but worth it as far he was concerned. Each was unique and themed - a design based around an idea executed by the colours and meanings and scents of the flowers chosen.

The pride Hannibal took in these arrangements, together with the unexpected pleasure he felt at the young man's purchase, had him replying - "each of these arrangements have a set meaning that-"

"Yes, I know. I read the sign." The man cut him off, still looking down, though his expression - even at such an angle - was clearly exasperated.

Unsure what he could possibly say that might not be met with a curt response, Hannibal gave a nod and rung up the flowers.

*

To say that Hannibal hadn't thought about the scruffy, rude omega again would be a complete lie.

He had spent the rest of his working day thinking about the man, or more precisely, thinking of all the clever things he might have said. He imagined what joy it might be to coax a smile from the man, or even laughter.

However, by the time the man happened in again, Hannibal had resigned himself to never seeing him again. Instead, perhaps he was to be a new regular?

Hannibal stood, frozen to the spot as the same omega came in, this time going straight to his *My Design* arrangements, looking through them as if looking for something particular. And Hannibal had to still everything within him in order to school his expression and tone into something flat and blasé.

He took a breath before moving to the front of the counter and towards the omega, asking smoothly - "are you looking for something in particular?"

The omega glanced up at him for the briefest moment, before back at the flowers.

His eyes reflected the green of the foliage and his stubble was a little less than last time but still not freshly shaven.

“No.” The man replied bluntly.

He should have expected the terse answer, but even so Hannibal found himself stuck for words.

“Very well...” Hannibal replied pleasantly and made his way back to the counter.

“I uh... I mean, I know what I’m looking for. Thanks.” The man said as Hannibal walked away. When Hannibal turned back to smile and start conversation, the man had turned his back to look at more of the arrangements. Hannibal took the hint and went back to his counter, ringing up the flowers when the man was done and letting him leave with the minimal of pleasantries.

*

With two interactions to play over in his head, Hannibal was still unsure as to how they had happened as they had. He was suave and charming. He worked hard at being the sort of alpha the people wanted to know. With inherited wealth he had been able to pursue his more creative interests, but he had originally studied, and for a time practiced medicine. He was by no means an alpha easily overlooked.

But all that was meaningless when the object of his attentions could shut him down so easily.

On their third meeting Hannibal didn’t even get the chance to open with something suave - startled into silence by the man’s appearance - before he even started looking for a bunch of flowers.

The omega was totally clean shaven and in a police dress uniform. As he entered the shop he removed his hat and put it under his arm as he walked straight to the *My Design* display and began to look at the current range.

Hannibal felt his eye twitch.

Never before had he imagined that he might have a thing for uniforms. And yet...

“Do you have any more of those... um... the harmony ones? With all the yellow flowers?” It took a few seconds to register the omega was addressing him from across the shop.

Hannibal blinked and cleared his throat. “I... I’m afraid not. I can put together such a bouquet for you to collect tomorrow if you would like to come back?”

“You design all these?” The omega asked, curious. Hannibal couldn’t quite determine if he was impressed.

“Yes, fresh every day. If you-”

The omega shook his head and picked up a bouquet - peace - and brought it to the counter.

Hannibal clenched his jaw, the scent of the omega was heightened by a slight, and fresh sweat - as though he had been standing around in his uniform for a while. Perhaps some sort of official ceremony? He kept to the usual pleasantries as he rang up the flowers, letting out a sigh of relief when the omega left - hoping he hadn't scented Hannibal's slight arousal.

*

It was a few weeks before the omega returned, and Hannibal found himself making harmony bouquets almost daily in the hopes that he would have one to hand if the chance arose.

However, when the omega did return he bypassed the Hannibal's designs altogether and went to the bouquets set aside for Mother's Day - honing in on the yellow flowers.

It was only at this point that Hannibal had allowed himself to consider something his mind had clearly blotted out - that the omega was buying flowers for *someone*. Someone who liked yellow. Seeing him now looking through bouquets specifically for the occasion sent a shiver of relief through Hannibal. Perhaps all these flowers had merely been a loving son treating his mother?

The omega had a little stubble again and was wearing smart slacks and a shirt that had likely started the day crisp but was now showing it's wear. He was wearing a mismatched tie that was hanging loose, top button undone, showing the man's slender and unmarked throat. He once more carried the sweat of his day, light but indicative of a his working hours.

He looked tired and Hannibal found himself wanting to offer some comfort.

The omega selected one of the mother's day bouquets - a yellow and pale pink combination - and brought it to the counter.

Hannibal looked up then, a pleasant smile for the customer. "A lovely choice. I'm sure you're mother will enjoy them." He said as he moved to the till to ring them up.

"My mother is dead." The man responded gruffly, and for a moment Hannibal was sure the floor might open up and swallow him. Perhaps the omega saw the blood drain utterly from his face, because he continued hesitantly - "these are... they're for my aunt." The man's voice was softer as he added this, perhaps worried he had been too harsh. "She helped raise me."

Hannibal smiled warmly, feeling privileged with the tiny snippet of personal information. He was delighted when the man lifted his head to look at him - making eye contact longer than he ever had before.

Eyes as deep and blue as the ocean on this occasion.

"I'm sure she will appreciate the gift." Hannibal remained pleasant despite being, for the first time he could recall since puberty, completely rattled.

“Yeah.” Was the only reply, as the man handed over the correct money and turned on his heel.

Hannibal was left watching his back, with that tantalising scent lingering in the growing distance between them.

*

“These are beautiful, darlin’” Aunt Bella told him. “You shouldn’t have.”

Will smiled, watching as she clutched the bouquet with her slight hands.

“From My Design? He always makes such wonderful arrangements.” She cooed. Will had been going to the flower shop since Bella mentioned having liked the bouquets. Not so much mentioned as waxed lyrical in her recommendations until Will felt compelled to go and buy her some flowers. She had apparently gone there often until they had changed the bus route she used to take and now it was too far out of the way. So Will had started going on his way to visiting her on his off-duty days.

He gave her the look that said - *you know I got them there, just as you wanted me too.*

Which she ignored and continued - “You know, Vera Bloom? She was looking for some nice flowers for her daughter’s wedding. Perhaps you can get me a card I can pass on to her?” She smiled, and Will went to protest but then she added - “if it isn’t out of your way of course.”

He had never been able to say no to aunt Bella.

*

Will wasn’t an idiot. And he was far from unobservant.

First of all, Bella was not nearly as cunning as she liked to think. At first he had truly believed she just liked the flowers from the shop, but after a couple of visits and the glint in her eye, he knew it was more. Damn interfering old lady was trying to push him into the path of the seemingly gentlemanly, suave and eligible alpha that ran the shop.

Secondly, it hadn’t in any way escaped his notice that the alpha might not be adverse to this idea.

The subtle change to the alpha’s breathing, the stolen glances every time he was in the shop - he knew the man was curious about him. He’d come across plenty of *curious* folks in the past, and it was rarely a pleasant experience. Even in this day and age, people often still had a very firm line in sexual attraction and gender and sadly it was his experience that alphas were attracted to either female omegas or sometimes male omegas. Rarely both. And Will was both, or neither, depending on which of his failed dates you asked.

He wanted to hold out hope that not everyone was blinkered and closed minded, but so far his experiences had left him guarded and hesitant. So even with Bella’s clear recommendation of this particular alpha, Will saw no reason to mark him from the rest.

Will had thought things would get better after his top surgery, and it had made him more confident, but if anything the reaction he had from alphas got worse. Before - even with a binder - they could easily pretend he was a female omega. Not someone who identified as, and was correcting their body to be, that rare and traditionally unvalued *thing* - a male omega.

All of this was going through Will's head as he returned to the flower shop. Not that it should... except, he was sort of attractive and Will couldn't pretend he hadn't caught the alpha's scent and found it pleasant. Not that he had any plans on telling Bella that.

The alpha clearly scenting him was no reason to get on edge about this. He'd had plenty of practice at turning down advances should they be made. Besides, actual interest was unlikely - he'd already been to the shop the day of this year's academy graduation, dress uniform and all. And in his experience, being a male omega cop was often as knot shrinking for some alphas as being trans was.

Though in this case, perhaps Will was wrong.

When the alpha looked up from shelving some decorative pots as Will walked in, his eyes lit up... and then ran slowly over Will's smart(ish) clothes with something like amusement and maybe a little lust - taking him in and coming to rest on the police badge on Will's belt. Ok, so maybe this alpha liked guys in uniform?

"You're not very subtle you know." Will found himself blurting.

The alpha quirked a brow and looked confused. "I'm sorry?"

"You keep scenting me, now you're checking me out. Not subtle." Will's words this time at least came out on a light chuckle which drew a smile from the alpha. It was probably the most words he'd ever said to the man, and he wasn't even sure what had compelled him, beyond his aunt's interference.

The alpha's smile was nice - the right amount of pointy teeth that Will was suddenly imagining against his skin. *Dammit!*

"I apologise. I must have been more obvious in my interests than I realised, and more than was polite. I'm sorry if I offended you." The florist replied, the full extent of his rich East European accent, and courtliness, coming out.

It sent a shiver over Will's skin, giving him goosebumps. He'd never considered having a *type* before, he'd always been too preoccupied with whether he was someone else's type to think about it the other way around. But he was in no way whatsoever repelled by anything about the alpha so far.

Will gave a curt nod of acknowledgement.

"I... I'm good at reading people." Will gave a dismissive shrug, but it was true. It was why he was doing so well at work, having made Detective a couple of years before. Many others wouldn't have picked up on the alpha's subtle behaviour in the same way... well, except when

he was clearly checking out Will as he soon as he walked in. That was very much obvious to even the most short-sighted.

The florist smiled. "Can I hope that your return is to address my, unwittingly, clear interest? Or are you here on business?"

Will swallowed, hard. Being checked out and subtly scented was one thing, but this was some next level flirting that he had not prepared for. Was it even flirting? It damn near felt like a proposition. Perhaps a result of not letting the alpha get a word in edgewise before this moment.

He let out an uncomfortable laugh. "Business... I, my aunt asked for a business card - she has a friend who is getting married..."

The florist nodded, though did not lose his smile, as he went to the counter and fetched a card and brochure. He brought it over and stood next to Will to pass it to him. *Right* next to Will, much closer than Will was sure was appropriate.

"This is a brochure of my wedding products and services." He handed it over with the card, his thumb grazing the back of Will's hand as he took it. "I'd be happy to offer a discounted rate for your friend."

Will blinked. This guy really wasn't going to even try and be subtle now.

"Uh..." Will stuttered before finding the words. "Not my friend... My aunt's..."

"All the same." The florist gave a dismissive wave of his hand but didn't step back.

"That's... well, ok. That's nice of you but..." Will began to protest, whilst trying not to seem quite as unsettled and flustered by the alpha's closeness as he was.

"I was hoping such a nicety might make you more amenable to agreeing to my next request." The florist started, a slight grin - predatory but not sly or lecherous.

Will didn't reply, sure he knew what was coming next and waiting for it to land. After a few moments the florist continued -

"I have a problem with trespassers at my home, I've noticed some people must be using my garden as a shortcut and I'm not fond of the impact that is having on my floral borders. I've been meaning to ask for expert advice on how to better fence it, or other deterrents I might use. Legal deterrents of course. I wonder if you might oblige me? If you have a spare afternoon in the near future where I might prevail upon your time?"

Will was stunned into silence. He had been so sure the alpha was going to proposition him in some way, albeit politely. It took a moment to process that he hadn't, to let the anxiety that had hyped up in him bleed back out as he exhaled a sigh of relief.

"I uh... Sure... I don't..."

"I've put you on the spot, I apologise, you have my card. You don't need to respond now." The florist looked genuinely concerned and Will immediately sensed his regret and worry - his realisation of the anxiety Will had felt.

"No, no, it's fine." Will tried to reassure. He let out a low chuckle and rubbed the back of his neck, heated as it was. "I just... You caught me off guard. I thought you were going to ask me for a date or some fool thing like that."

The alpha didn't join with his laughing, but a warm and disarming smile spread across his face. "Given my apparent lack of subtlety, I was trying to play it cool. I was going to ask you after you had been tempted by the wonderful iced tea I planned to offer you as you looked over my garden."

Will stopped laughing but continued to smile, something soothing in the admission. It further disarmed Will and for a moment he considered it, before letting doubt and anxiety grip him.

"That's, um... I'll come and look at your garden, but... I don't know if I can do more than that." He started to shuffle from foot to foot.

The florist gave a nod. "Of course, I will temper my expectations." The words were damn near purred and Will couldn't help but bite his lower lip in response. "Perhaps you can let me know when you are next available? I will free my calendar and work around you."

"Sure." Will nodded, looking down at the card in his hand. Feathers and Antlers - Floral creations by Dr. Hannibal Lecter. "Um, sure Doctor Lecter."

"Please, call me Hannibal." The words were low and deep and sent vibrations through Will, who only had it in him to nod before walking out the door.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Iced tea and a kiss.

Chapter Notes

NB: I use the term pansexual here because that is how Hannibal is described by Bryan Fuller. It is not a comment on whether pan or bi is the most appropriate term to use for someone who is dating/sleeping with/in a relationship with someone who is transgender.

"Oh my god. Are you serious? Call him! Message him!" CSI Bev Katz sat opposite him in the cafeteria, her eyes wide with excitement.

"I will." Will answered gruffly. He should have known that telling his best friend was a bad idea. They had worked together for a long time - Katz had been in the CSI Lab since he'd been a beat cop. She'd always pushed him over his love life, or lack thereof. "I'll arrange to go look at his garden, as he asked. But that's it."

"Yeah, look at his *garden*." Bev replied, waggling her eyebrows. He wasn't even sure what the innuendo was meant to mean but he shook his head anyway.

"Bev." He warned in a low voice. "Don't poke the bear."

She burst out laughing, giggling so hard she nearly fell off her chair and attracted the attention of several other officers having their lunch.

"Oh my god, please tell me he's a bear? Is he a bear?"

"No!" Will protested. "I didn't mean... He's... athletic, maybe hairy? I don't know. It's not like I saw him naked and... this stops here. No more talking about the florist, naked or otherwise."

She giggled a little more and then huffed a sigh as the fits finally subsided. She started thoughtfully picking at her food before muttering -

"Maybe you could-"

"No." Will cut off, trying not to raise his voice.

"Will, not every alpha is an asshole. You've had a bad run. This guy seems interested, and... from the way you tell it, I damn well know you're interested too... in your weird, reluctant way. What could be the harm in-"

"The harm is in the conversation I have to have. The endless fucking coming out. The look of disappointment or even disgust on his face when I tell him."

"So... don't tell him. Let him figure it out in the bedroom, once he already likes you." Bev was determined to make this happen. "You always say, it's no one's business unless you're fucking... I mean... I guess that is where this might go eventually?"

"And have him reject me then instead? Or worse? Sure he seems like a nice guy, courtly, gentlemanly. Too good to be damn true... until he finds out and knocks my lights out for lying to him, misleading him."

"Or maybe he just won't care." There was an edge of pleading to her voice. "Tell him in a way you feel safe to do so and then go from there?"

Will puffed out a few angry breaths. She was right in some ways, exceptionally wrong in others.

To prove a point he pulled out his phone and the card, tapped in the mobile number and wrote out a message, speaking it aloud for Katz's benefit -

~Hey. This is Detective Will Graham. I can come over to your garden on Sunday afternoon. If you want to make me iced tea that would be nice. BTW, in case it becomes pertinent, I'm ftm transgender. What's your address?

He slammed the send key and waiting.

"What's your bet?" He damn near gloated in expectation. "Shitty reply or no reply at all?"

She let out a long sigh. "There's no need to be so salty, not everyone is-"

She was cut off by the bleep of his phone. Will's heart stopped with the reality of the situation. Maybe it was like pulling off a bandaid and better to do it now than later but rejection was never nice. And so far his experience of rejection had been overly shitty too.

"Read it." Bev grinned enthusiastically.

He sighed. He wished it were that simple, that at worst it would be a polite decline and not a barrage of vitriol that experience had told him it could be. At least it was over text and not in person - small mercies.

Will picked up the phone and flicked it through to the message.

He read it twice before reading it out loud to Bev.

"Sunday is perfect, I will have the iced tea chilling. I hope it isn't too forward of me to say I am looking forward to seeing you again'... Then his address. That's it."

“See? Good guy. He doesn’t care.” Bev grinned, the Katz who got the cream.

“M-maybe he didn’t see it. I mean, he replied pretty quick - maybe he skim read the text and-”

“Will.” Bev’s voice was gentle and she placed a hand over one of his. “Maybe he doesn’t care.”

The thought was so far from Will’s experiences since he had started to transition, that it was difficult to even hope it.

Male omegas were fairly uncommon, and often not very desired. Gender and sexuality was so complex, even in this day and age, and people had thought him insane to transition. But... he wasn’t female. Never had been, never felt that way. Between the dysphoria and knowing his true self, it was an easy decision to transition. But anyone wanting - *needing* - to transition from a female omega - an almost revered gender - to a male omega seemed to baffle society.

If alphas were interested in omegas, they usually wanted females. Hell, even the same could be said for betas and omegas, though Will’s own sexuality leaned towards alphas. If anything, since his transition, his desire for alphas - for their scent, their knots - was even greater than it had been before. A side-effect of the hormone therapy.

He knew that to transition and finally feel comfortable in his body, meant that he might sacrifice other aspects of his life. Truly he didn’t care, not until times like this. When an alpha would express an interest and he’d have to explain his situation and that put pay to that. Unless they were just curious enough for a fuck or a fumble, but it never went further. He was just a curiosity at best. Which he, sadly, often settled for.

Will let out a heavy sigh and Bev gave him a sympathetic smile.

“Just see what happens.” She encouraged.

Will nodded, the guy seemed nice, but he was determined not to get his hopes up. The address was in a wealthy part of town and that was off putting too. What did a wealthy, successful, smart and attractive alpha want with him?

He bussed their trays and then walked Katz back to the lab before going home, his shift had ended hours earlier but he’d needed to talk to someone. Part of him was even glad he had.

*

When Hannibal answered the door, he couldn’t help the flutter in his chest at the sight of Will Graham in uniform once more. He’d never considered having any kind of fancy for uniforms before, but seeing the gruff omega stood there, frowning and looking the perfect picture of annoyance, was breathtaking. Hannibal found himself suddenly understanding the appeal of police themed stripograms.

After a few moments, during which his mouth went so dry he had to swallow - hard - Hannibal invited Will in.

"Please, do come in." Hannibal crooned, the charm coming easily to him in Will's presence now that he was almost certain the omega wasn't going to cut him off mid-sentence.

He ushered Will ahead of him, pointing the way towards the back of the house, as he closed the front door. When he turned and walked after him, he was immediately entranced by the snug fit of Will's trousers and had to bite his tongue to stop himself commenting on the excellent cut of Will's uniform.

Whilst it would have been true, it would obviously have been a come on and it was already clear that Will Graham was not receptive to such heavy flirtation. And what was more... Hannibal wanted more. His wonderful scent, his cranky manner - there was something utterly enticing about this man who had no care for Hannibal's social standing - and Hannibal wanted to know him better.

For the first time in his life, confirmed eligible bachelor Hannibal Lecter, wanted to seriously court someone.

As they walked down the hallway to the kitchen, Hannibal fell into stride beside the omega. "Right this way." Hannibal practically purred the words out and he saw the little frown crease above Will's eyes in reaction to the tone. Interesting.

Hannibal stepped ahead and opened the backdoor, ushering him out into the garden.

"So... where..." Will started and his frown deepened. Hannibal wondered if he thought this was a ruse. Which... in part it was, though he had been clear about that. He really did keep getting trespassers, but he knew it was some local children playing hide and seek. He remembered well enough his own childhood to not begrudge them in the slightest. He'd already decided to move his herbaceous border so that at least that wouldn't keep getting trampled.

"At the back." Hannibal answered, strolling down the long garden, somehow bolstered by the knowledge that the beautiful omega followed behind him. "Just here." Hannibal got to the very back of the garden and pointed at the fencing - just big enough for very slight children to squeeze through the slats - the trampled flower beds, and a small amount of litter. Hannibal huffed and picked up the two empty candy wrappers, making a mental note to have a word with the children about littering.

Will surveyed it for a moment. "I mean... it's just kids right?" He looked at Hannibal somewhat worn, as though Hannibal was stupid for not realising this.

"You think so?" Hannibal asked innocently. "I guess that would explain the candy. Hmm."

"Maybe you just need to have a word with your neighbours... or get fencing that kids can't slip through." His tone was gruff, he seemed annoyed and put out, which Hannibal not only found understandable but disgustingly endearing. "And, whatever you do, do not call the cops

on them. Last thing the police need is yet more rich people reporting kids for being kids." He ground out the words.

"That happens a lot?" Hannibal asked, actually curious and surprised.

"Some. There is this... Rich people tend to think of the police as their own personal security team. A kid tramples your flowers? Call the police. One accidentally hits your car when playing ball in the cul-de-sac? Call the police. And... it's pointless paperwork and time just to give a kid a lesson their parents could." Will huffed his exasperation. "Just talk to the kids, talk to their parents... It doesn't need to be mediated by someone in a uniform just to make a point."

"Oh, I would never-" Hannibal started, trying to reassure that it had been the farthest thing from his mind. But Will's eyes grew wide as though he had just realised what he'd said.

"I didn't mean... I'm not saying all rich people... I'm not saying you'd call the cops just because you're rich..."

Hannibal let out a low chuckle, which brought the most amazing blush to Will's cheeks. "How about that iced tea?"

*

It had been a terrible idea to turn up in uniform, Will conceded.

He rarely wore it day to day since his promotion to detective, but he'd hoped that it would lend an air of professionalism - keep the alpha at arm's length if Will felt the need. Instead Hannibal seemed to be checking him out at every opportunity. As they sipped iced tea overlooking the lawn, taking a seat at an extravagant patio set, Hannibal's gaze seemed steeped in hungry lust. Will couldn't even help the slight arousal the attention caused him.

"How long have you been a police officer, Will?"

"Oh, um... Six years." He was caught off guard by the personal question. His few friends knew pretty much everything about him, and he rarely made new ones or shared any personal information.

"A noble profession." Hannibal smiled, clearly trying to pull more information from him.

Will snorted. "Sometimes. I just... I was really into problem solving, um, I'm good at understanding people - motives, things like that. I guess I just always wanted to be a detective."

"I never asked what department you work in." Hannibal settled back into his chair, seemingly happy to be completely entertained by Will's life.

"Homicide." Will said bluntly.

Hannibal nodded. "I should imagine that can be quite stressful." He sipped his tea, looking at Will over the glass. "What do you do to relax?"

Will frowned. This felt like an interview and he wondered if he was meant to ask questions back. For as well as he could understand murderers, he was pretty shit at reading people on this social level.

"I guess this is my clumsy way of getting to know you." Hannibal chuckled when Will didn't answer.

"Oh, yeah... I, uh. I'm not easy to get to know." He let out a nervous laugh.

"I don't give up easily." Hannibal smiled and there was something of the predator there. It caused Will's chest to flutter slightly and his cheeks to burn.

"I, um... I like fishing. I have a couple of pet dogs, so I, uh, walk a lot. Take them down to the stream on my property and uh... fish." Will's cheeks reddened all the more, wondering if it sounded quite as boring to Hannibal's ears as it did to his own.

"Fishing can be very calming... and of course rewarding. Do you cook your catch?"

Will winced. "I do... but I can't say I'm much good at it. Just a couple of tried and tested favourites. Gumbo mostly." Another nervous laugh.

"Ah, the accent... Can I detect... Louisiana?" Hannibal asked.

"Yeah." Will smiled. "New Orleans. Grew up there. Transferred when I..." When he transitioned - wanting a fresh start, away from some of the asshole alphas there. Aunt Bella had insisted on moving too, they were the only family each other had since Uncle Jack passed.

He was almost stealth at work since the move - only a few people knew and it wasn't exactly a secret, it just didn't need to be said. It was bad enough to be a male omega, they were quite happy to be assholes over that without the ribbing he'd get for wanting to actually transition from the beautiful natural state of a female omega to the ridiculous freak of nature he had become - in their eyes. Even so, he had earned his stripes over the years and was taken seriously, treated with the respect due any detective. He wouldn't have got that back in Louisiana amongst those that knew him before.

Will cleared his throat, but Hannibal didn't push for him to continue.

Instead the alpha leaned in to pour more tea, his nostrils flared at the no doubt lingering scent of Will's earlier arousal and he wanted the ground to swallow him up.

"An interesting aftershave. It complements your scent well."

Will blushed at the over familiar comment and stammered "m-my aunt got it for me. It has a ship on the bottle, she thought it was manly... uh..." The words had fallen out like a confession and Will's gut twisted. Hannibal smiled warmly, an open look of interest.

He looked across the table and trembled a little at Hannibal's steady gaze.

“So I... I guess we should have this conversation.” Will swallowed and tried his damndest not to look away - to maintain eye contact.

“Conversation?” Hannibal looked genuinely puzzled.

“Um, what I... what I text you. About... about me...” Will stumbled over the words, his anxiety fading a little when Hannibal’s expression registered his meaning and grew to a comforting smile.

“You don’t need to tell me anything you are not comfortable with, Will. I wouldn’t presume any right to your personal life.”

Will was sure he meant it to be respectful, but Hannibal’s words cut a little.

“Oh, I thought... I mean. From what you’d said, I thought maybe you wanted to... go on a date? And I guess... then at some point it is your business?” Will felt the flush of heat over his cheeks. Maybe he had read it all wrong? But then, he wasn’t the easiest person to flirt with, and knew that he had likely not only come across as having no interest but being totally resistant to the interest shown in him.

“Will.” Hannibal breathed out his name in a way that sent a shiver over his skin. The alpha moved a little closer, close enough to run his hand down Will’s arm and take his hand. “Every time we meet I want all the more to take you on a date, to see where this might go. You put me in my place and that doesn’t happen a lot.” Hannibal chuckled, squeezing Will’s hand. “But I don’t want you to feel uncomfortable, or in any way required to give more information than you are ready to do so.”

Hannibal smiled and released his hand. “I feel the stirrings of a connection with you that I wish to explore. You intrigue me.”

Will clenched his jaw, the word *intrigue* grating on him for how close it was to curious. He hated being a source of *intrigue*.

“Are you... what is this to you?” Will blurted, his tone accusatory. “I’m trying to ascertain whether you have a proclivity for my parts and you... I need to know if I’m just a curiosity to you?”

“Will, I-” Hannibal took his hand again and pulled it up to his lips as he spoke. “I’m sorry, I haven’t handled this right. I didn’t want you to feel uncomfortable and yet I have managed to anyway.” He let out a soft sigh against Will’s hand before lowering it and looking in his eyes. “Your gender is irrelevant to me Will. I am attracted to you, to what little I know of you as a person thus far - enough to know I want to know you better, and no doubt deepen that attraction. And... that attraction is not affected by your physical being.”

“Oh.” Was all Will could find to say. His brain supplied a word he’d read somewhere - *pansexual*.

He wasn’t in need of further words as Hannibal leaned in and pressed his lips gently to Will’s. A chaste kiss that felt full of promise and longing. Will struggled not to whine as the

alpha pulled back.

He felt a sudden flush of arousal, more so at the alpha's expressed desire for him than the kiss itself.

"Do you... uh... should we..." Will's breath trembled out of him and he felt himself unconsciously leaning closer to the alpha as he attempted, poorly, to proposition him.

"Will..." His name was spoken softly again and Hannibal moved back, sitting back in his seat so that there was more distance between them. "I meant what I said about going on a date. I would love for you to stay a while, if you're free? To talk, perhaps listen to some music together. But... I don't want that kiss to mislead you into thinking that I want something more physical from you immediately."

"Oh." Will's heart sank and he wondered if Hannibal just wasn't into sex, which... was fine. He did kind of like the guy. Or at the least was both interested in him as a person and flattered by the way he treated him. "That's okay, if you're not... If you don't like sex or-"

"Oh, oh... no. Sorry, I haven't made myself understood." He let out a low chuckle and a gentle grin spread across his face. "I must admit you fluster me, I'm not normally this inarticulate."

Will thought that might just be the most ridiculous thing the man had said - he was super articulate, more than Will could ever hope to be. And if *this* was flustered, what the hell did the guy look like when he totally cool and collected?

"It's ok... uh..."

"Sorry." Hannibal continued. "I meant to say that, I am very attracted to you, physically. But I would like to take things slow."

"Oh! Right." Will found himself nodding, swallowing hard and letting out a breathless chuckle. "I've never... I mean... I don't really date." He let out a nervous laugh which only served to make Hannibal's smile grow more. No, usually it ended badly or in a few booty calls. Maybe it was for the best not to jump into something physical.

Hannibal grasped Will's hand again and stroked a thumb over the back of it. "Perhaps I can take you to dinner, the next evening you are free, and we can go from there?"

*

After agreeing to let Hannibal know when he would next be available they had finished the tea, and Will had left.

And then spent way too long analysing, and over analysing, what had happened. Did he even really like this guy? Sure he was attracted to him and the fact that he liked Will made it hard to not like him. But what did Will even know about the guy?

He winced as he realised that he hadn't really asked Hannibal anything about himself. He had been so busy needing reassurance about himself that he'd likely come across as completely self centered. He groaned as he dropped into his beat up old sofa, replaying the afternoon

over and over in his head. He could understand if Hannibal ended up losing interest. If he wanted to take it slow physically then it was to get to know each other better first, and he hadn't shown half the interest he felt. He was just no damn good at these things.

In truth, Will's move would have been to sleep with the guy - to get it out of the way. To alleviate that concern and know whether he was still interested after that, before pouring any more time into this. But Hannibal wanted to take it slow and maybe that was the right call?

Will Graham was not good with people.

When his phone buzzed he was half expecting a text from Hannibal, that he'd changed his mind about dating such a difficult omega. But instead it was a gleeful and snoop text from Bev wanting to know how it all went.

~I think I made an ass of myself

~Don't worry, maybe he's an ass man

~I mean it Bev. He was really sweet and asked questions and clearly wanted to get to know me. I I know nothing more about him at all... other than that he has a very nice house and garden and can make excellent iced tea.

Will let out a sigh and set down his phone for the briefest moment before snatching it up again. He ignored the text of platitudes that popped up from Bev and instead tapped out a message to Hannibal.

~Thank you for the iced tea. Sorry if I was difficult, I'm not good with people but I'd like to get to know you. I find you interesting.

Will sent the text before he could chicken out and then reread it with a groan. God he sounded like an idiot.

~Will, I enjoyed your company immensely, you weren't difficult in the least.

~I was just worried. Because I didn't ask much about you and I didn't want you to think I wasn't interested. If I wasn't interested I wouldn't have told you about my 'situation'.

Will compulsively replied and then chided himself, wanting to stop before he made a fool of himself, but wanting to make his interest clear. Because... he was interested.

Yeah, he liked how Hannibal liked him, how he treated him. But he also liked how cool and calm Hannibal was. With such a high stress job Will was always appreciative of that quality in people, and the way it made him feel. He liked that Hannibal was polite and courteous. Courtly? He might not know much about the man's interests but he enjoyed his company immensely. And... he really was very attractive...

He resisted the urge to tap out more texts to save the situation, knowing it would likely just dig him a bigger hole. Especially as his first impulse was to add that if he wasn't interested he wouldn't have stayed for tea... or enjoyed the kiss.

He was saved by the beeping of his phone and another response from Hannibal.

~Will, I don't want you to ever feel you have to share anything with me that you are not comfortable in doing so. However, I am glad you told me if it makes you more comfortable. Please accept my assurances once more that it has no bearing whatsoever on my deep interest in you.

The cynic in Will hated that the message sent a little flutter through him. He was trying to think of some response - something not as lame as just responding "thank you", when his phone beeped again. Another text from Hannibal.

~I feel I should make clear - my physical attraction to you was immediate. My desire to know you better began the moment you first spoke to me. Nothing has changed either of those things.

Will groaned and sank back into his sofa. A hand over his reddening face as he felt more than a little embarrassed at the arousal the message caused. The fact was the embarrassment came less from having become aroused, but from his desire to tell Hannibal about it made his face burn. He had to stop himself responding that the message had made him both hard and wet.

He'd had a few fuck buddies in the past that he might talk dirty with, but this wasn't the situation - half the time those guys just saw him as a kink, a fetish. And Hannibal wanted to take things slow - which was sort of hilarious all considered. Will's experiences with dating were either a disaster or a hookup or both. He hadn't been with anyone in a while, and the physical attraction to the alpha was going to make taking things slow a little difficult.

He played the phone over in his hand, tempted to reply... *something*. Something that would likely be wholly inappropriate. Not wanting to leave Hannibal hanging, and resisting the urge to go straight back over to the alpha's house and proposition him, Will replied -

~Ok, thanks.

Like a complete fucking idiot, before jumping in the shower and stroking himself to completion.

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

Flowers, dates, and taking it too damn slow.

"You never replied, Will." Bev scolded him as she dropped into the chair next to him in the canteen - their usual Monday morning routine of coffee and pastries.

"Huh?" Will looked up, completely lost in thought.

"Last night. We were texting then you disappeared. Don't tell me you went back over to the florist's house and-"

Will cut off her gleeful chatter by raising his hand. "No, Bev."

Maybe she just knew him too damn well because she let out a hoot of excitement before pressing -

"Tell me everything. Did you sleep with him?"

Will huffed out a sigh and glared at her across the table. "No! We're taking it slow..."

"You? Taking it slow? Oh my god. Will Graham, did you jerk off thinking about your new boyfriend?"

"Fuck, Bev, keep your voice down." Will growled. How the fuck did she always read his mind like this?

She smiled at him, a knowing grin. "Ok, don't tell me all. Just tell me if you're seeing him again."

"Yeah." Will answered gruffly.

Bev let out a squeal that drew the attention of way too many co-workers. "Shit. Sorry." She was grinning wide.

Will's felt deflated in the face of her enthusiasm. "I... I just worry that..." he sighed. "Bev, this is the first person in a... well, since I transitioned, that has really shown genuine interest in me for something beyond sex. And I... I'm just worried that I only like him because he likes me, you know? Feels a bit unfair..."

"Stop!" She held her hand up in his face. "The glint in your eyes when you talk about him says otherwise. And so what even if that is the case? Just enjoy it, see what happens." She

waved that hand dismissively.

“He wants to date me. Like actually take things slow and go on dates, get to know each other.”

“Oh.” In such a short word, the tone went from surprised to concerned. “And, how do you feel about that?” She knew the ins and outs of everything that had happened on every shitty date after shitty date. So far, being trans was either a problem or a fetish to all the alphas he’d met. Moreover, being a male omega was a problem or a fetish. Dating never worked out well one way or the other even if it ended in sex and occasional booty calls. They didn’t want him, they wanted to have their fun with his body. And he allowed it sometimes, because it was better than being celibate. Maybe that was all this would be with Hannibal too, but so far it didn’t feel that way. Either way it would be so much easier if they just got the sex out of the way and Will could relax about it.

“How do I feel about taking things slow? Terrified.” Will finally replied.

*

The conversation with Bev left Will feeling weirdly unsettled throughout a day filled with non stop paperwork. By the time he was thinking about heading home for the night, he couldn’t help wondering if the Hannibal’s shop was still open. He could pop in and say hi, see what happened from there. Maybe even explain that he'd really like to get sex out of the way before investing more.

By time he got to the door it was well past six and the shop looked closed up but for the dim light towards the back. Will hesitated before trying the door, finding it locked. His heart sank, which sort of surprised him.

He had actually been looking forward to seeing the alpha, despite his best efforts.

As he was about to turn away, Will caught movement at the back of the store, shadowing the light that had been left on in the back room. He couldn’t help but reach for his shoulder holster and snapping the catch in case he needed to pull his firearm.

The shadow moved again and Will frowned. There had to be a way around the back. He moved quickly to the end of the high-end strip mall and around the corner, checking the shadows in the back access alley as he went. Nothing seemed otherwise untoward, but when he got to the backdoor of the third shop along - Hannibal’s shop - it was slightly ajar. He stopped, hand on gun as he listened for any commotion and watched for signs of trouble.

A shadow moved again, casting him in partial darkness for a moment before the dim light resumed.

Will clenched his jaw and eased the door open, slowly, quietly. He took a loose grip on his gun but left it holstered, as he stepped silently into the little hallway. The door into the backroom that sat between Will and the shop, was ajar enough to be the source of the light. Will crept carefully towards it until he heard a loud clattering sound.

Hand still ready to draw his weapon, Will shouldered the half open door. He braced himself, took a strong stance and took in the room - ready to draw.

“Will?”

Hannibal’s confused expression was replaced within seconds by something Will could only describe as a delighted smile.

Hannibal stood at a long counter, one end full of magnificent floral centerpieces, the other with the disparate parts it had obviously taken to create them. In his hands Hannibal held a metal bucket - the floral contents of which appeared to be on the floor.

“Are you alright?” Will found himself asking, like an idiot. Still keyed up and ready to act.

Hannibal’s face scrunched a little into an adorable smile-frown of slight confusion. Really adorable.

Fuck.

“I saw the light and heard a noise... I...” It sounded even more ridiculous saying it out loud. “I thought there was a break-in.”

Will didn’t realise his hand was still on his gun, his frame tense, until Hannibal placed the bucket on the bench and stepped to him. He slid his hand lightly over Will’s and drew it back from his weapon. Hannibal stood so close that the rich alpha scent, infused by the woodsy floral scent of the room, engulfed him. It didn’t calm him so much as it made his heart thud faster.

“Sorry.” He mumbled, feeling like a total fool.

Hannibal’s smile was soft, his hand curling around Will’s. “No need to apologise. I’m flattered to have you come to my rescue, detective.”

Will frowned and pulled his hand back. “Don’t make fun of me. I dropped by to see you and thought...” He shook his head. “I should go.”

“Will, no.” Hannibal snatched his hand back and stopped him. Will’s first instinct was to pull away again but he resisted, clenching his jaw. He had so many times been belittled and ridiculed for who he was. The one place that didn’t happen anymore was his job, where he’d proven himself over and over and had the actual bullet holes and commendations to show for it. He wasn’t ever going to let anyone make fun of him in that part of his life.

“I wasn’t making fun of you, please believe me.” Hannibal’s voice betrayed his clear distress. “I didn’t mean to offend you, I... simply meant that...” He seemed at an uncharacteristic loss for words and Will was surprised when he surged forward and pressed his lips to Will’s.

Will was too shocked to move for a moment, but then he parted his lips and let Hannibal deepen the kiss. At that Hannibal’s whole body moved against him and his hands slid around Will, holding him close as he explored with his tongue until Will was moaning into the alpha’s mouth.

Hannibal drew back, breathless and eyes dark with lust. “Will...”

His name breathed against his skin felt like a caress. Will moved forward trying to resume the sensual kiss, but Hannibal pulled back.

“I want you very much, but I have to...” He trailed off and indicated the bench. “I have to finish these for a wedding tomorrow. And we were going to take things-”

Will found himself laughing. “If you want to take things slow, you’re gonna have to stop kissing me. Sort of gives the wrong impression.”

Hannibal chuckled in return and nodded.

“I apologise, I am not as strong at withstanding temptation as I believed. I promise to be on my best behaviour.” Hannibal smiled and Will was sorely tempted to ask him - beg him - to definitely not be on his best behaviour.

Instead he cleared his throat and looked around the room.

“Well... now I’m here, can I keep you company?” Will asked, trying not to sound too hopeful.

“Certainly!” Hannibal beamed. He nodded to a tall stool alongside the bench and watched Will as he took a seat there, before starting to pick up the flowers that had dropped to the floor.

Will couldn’t help his smile as he settled on the stool and watched Hannibal right all the flowers before starting on another centrepiece.

*

Hannibal wished very much that he had not kissed Will Graham.

He wanted to take things slowly in order to ensure Will was completely comfortable and in no way felt pressured. He clearly had hang ups with past dates and perhaps even felt some hesitation about being physical with someone given that he was transgender. It really didn’t matter to Hannibal - he liked personalities not genitalia - but he wasn’t going to put any pressure whatsoever on Will. As much as he was desperate to make love with him.

Kissing him was not helping with that. Nor was the delicious scent of the omega’s light arousal, which lingered even over the scent of the wedding flowers.

“I’ve owned this shop for two years, but I had another before. Smaller, in a market. Very rustic.” Hannibal smiled, answering one of Will’s keen questions. In truth, he could likely have been done with the arrangements an hour earlier, but he had to admit to enjoying Will’s attention and prolonging his work. The omega asked him question after question about his life - growing up in a wealthy family in Lithuania; studying medicine; falling in love with art in Florence; immigrating to the US. Hannibal skipped over some of the more maudlin aspects that seemed out of place in this setting, but was otherwise happy to share.

Will was grinning at him. "Doctor, rich, successful businessman, well educated, and that accent... how are you still single?"

He took Will in for a moment, enjoying the way he had begun to relax into this flirty tone. It felt hard one and wonderful.

"Would you think I'm corny if I said I was waiting for the right person?" Hannibal crooned.

Will let out and sharp laugh. "I'd think you were lying. Call me a terrible cynic, but no one is that romantic."

"You're a terrible cynic, Will." Hannibal grinned, taking the invitation to tease and resisting the urge to lean in and kiss the omega again.

Will's smile was so warm and he had already shared so much of himself - the deeply personal information of his transition - that Hannibal found himself frowning once more.

"Will, I... I want to tell you something." Hannibal broached. He phrased that wrong, that was clear from the mixture of concern and then deep wariness in Will's face. It was difficult to talk about but it was something he wanted to share.

"What is it? You look so serious." Will said, his voice also showing he was clearly wary of what Hannibal was about to reveal.

"It's not... Nothing to be concerned about. I wanted to tell you, because... It is a matter of public record, but I would inform you myself." Hannibal started. He turned full on to Will, their knees almost touching as they sat on the high stools at the bench. "My family... They were killed. My parents were prominent and powerful in Lithuania - of great interest. I... I-"

"Hannibal, you don't have to... you..." Will was clearly pained, concerned for Hannibal.

Hannibal shook his head and managed a slight smile. A lot of people in his life knew of this though he had never spoken of it - they looked it up, or else knew from someone else in his social circle. But it was something he wanted to share with Will in this way - privately and without sensationalism.

He let his hand fall to Will's knee and Will's hand immediately covered his own and gave it a squeeze.

"One evening, it was raining. As a family we had been to the opening night of the Opera. There were photographers, paparazzi. We... the driver started for home but the roads were wet and some of the paparazzi followed us. They drove faster and faster, trying to overtake us in order to take photographs. I... I didn't know until many years later that my father had been involved in a scandal, accusations of fraud that turned out to be false. But even so, it was enough for us to be hounded on that night. And... in the end, the car spun out of control. Myself and the driver were injured. My parents, my little sister, they were killed."

Hannibal stopped and cleared his throat. Will looked utterly pained, as though he had no idea what to do with the information and Hannibal felt awful for causing that.

“I... I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to bring down the... I wanted you to know it from me and not from anything you might read should you come across it.”

“Hannibal.” His name was a sigh on Will’s lips.

He waved Will’s concern away. “It... was a long time ago-”

Will took his hand and pulled it to his chest briefly, before up to his lips, laying gentle kisses on it.

“I... I wish you didn’t hurt...” Will was clearly struggling to find the right words, but more than that - he seemed to be wrestling with whether to say more. He finally continued - “my mom died when I was six. Cancer... and then my dad... well he, he started drinking and didn’t stop. I was raised by my aunt and uncle, they sort of rescued me from my dad. Not that he even noticed. We never really stayed in touch. My uncle Jack used to call him now and then, check in... but...” Will shrugged. “He just... I was twelve when he died - organ failure from the alcohol. Aunt Bella and Uncle Jack raised me.”

He stopped suddenly as though he had run out of words. Then he chuckled suddenly and shook his head, still looking a little sad.

“I don’t really... Um, my best friend took five years to get that much out of me.”

Hannibal smiled warmly and nodded. “I seem to be in the equally horrid and convenient situation of not ever having to tell anyone my story. They often know it already - the internet being what it is. You’re the first person I’ve...” He shook his head and then quirked a brow, thinking about something Will had said. “You were raised by your aunt. The one who likes the flowers? Bella?”

Will nodded. “Yeah. She loves your flowers.” He chuckled.

“Bella Crawford?” Hannibal’s lips curled into a smile.

Will frowned and grinned. “Huh, you know her?”

“She was a regular customer, she told me the bus route was moving but that she would send her child along to pick flowers for her. That I might even want to ask that child out on a date if I was in want of an omega.” Hannibal couldn’t help the smile he beamed.

“Oh lawd!” Will’s accent was all Louisiana as he blushed from neck to the tips of his ears. He hid his face behind his hand and shook his head. “She’s a menace.”

Hannibal chuckled and pulled Will’s hand away until they were looking at each other.

“If it helps, my aunt would likely interfere quite a deal more ruthlessly if she weren’t in Paris. If she found the time between lecturing me on how my arrangements are not the ikebana she taught me.”

The slight change in subject seemed to calm Will’s embarrassment a little, which was good, even if Hannibal had been enjoying his blush.

“Ikebana?”

“In short, the Japanese art of flower arranging. My aunt is from Japan and taught me from when she took custody of me. Almost as therapy really - it is very calming. I’m sure I don’t do her any justice at all.” Hannibal chuckled.

Will shook his head and took hold of Hannibal’s hands, surprising the alpha by pulling them both to his lips.

“Your designs are a work of art.” Will replied gently.

Their eyes met and Hannibal wanted so much to lean in and kiss the omega. The temptation to become physically intimate was never more present

Hannibal had never had much interest in dating before. Will Graham had enticed him with no intention of doing so. Not just another omega looking to settle down. He was independent, gruff, unpolished and by rights the opposite of anything Hannibal should want. But it was all those things that had - surprisingly - attracted him. And Will’s scent, his physicality, his unruly hair and day old stubble. Everything he had known so far. Hannibal had never been so attracted to anyone before, on every possible level.

The way Will was looking at him, as though the temptation was almost too much for him too, was not helping.

“So. Dinner?” Hannibal changed the subject.

Will’s smile was dazzling, and did Hannibal’s resolve no good whatsoever.

“Now?”

Hannibal set the last centerpiece at the end of the bench and shook his head. “No, I have the wedding in the morning. Tomorrow evening?”

“I have crazy shifts all week.” Will said, apologetically. He looked at his watch briefly as though he might try and convince Hannibal there was time this evening.

Hannibal looked at Will and could see he was holding back saying something more. He’d like to lay bets that Will was thinking about inviting himself to Hannibal’s place, but that was definitely not something he’d be able to do.

“Another day. I’ll call you.” Hannibal replied.

*

Will had learned two things from his evening with Hannibal at the flower shop. Firstly, that yes he really did like the alpha and wanted to date him. Secondly, that whilst he was happy to take it slow if that’s what Hannibal needed, he was spending a lot of time furiously jerking off.

He'd been so tempted to invite himself over to Hannibal's that night. If Hannibal hadn't had the wedding to prepare for, he might even have pushed it a little. Though he'd honour Hannibal's desire to take things slow he wouldn't have minded hanging out on the sofa and making out like teenagers.

Will felt a pang at the thought. Maybe that was one of the reasons dating was even harder than it needed to be?

He'd never had that as a teenager. Too self conscious about his body, though he hadn't been entirely sure why at the time. It had felt alien to him and the thought of letting someone else that close had been almost impossible for years. Thinking back to who he was then and the idea of him making out on the sofa with someone, actually made him shudder. He would have been a girl making out on the sofa when he should have been a boy. There was an edge of bitterness that was always going to come with the acceptance of that fact. Something he could never change and just had to live with.

But something about Hannibal, above and beyond anyone he had met before, made him want to address it - make up for lost time.

As it was they hadn't seen each other for two weeks - schedules just not working out in the least given that it was shifting from Spring to Summer and Hannibal had weddings booked almost every week and weekend. His seasonal staff had already started in the shop, weeks earlier than usual.

Hannibal had been true to his word and called Will, and they had fallen into this easy flirtation over the phone every few days. Without being around each other and no chance of it getting physical, Hannibal seemed to relax into it a little and their calls often went from talking about their day to flirting shamelessly. To the point where a couple of times Will almost suggested phone sex - given that he was going to have to take care of himself after the call anyway. But he was sure that would be a bit much for Hannibal.

The previous night had definitely been one such occasion, so he was pleased to check his rota when he got in, to find that the weekend that Hannibal said he had free, Will did too. When he grabbed his lunch, eating it on the go, he took a moment to text his would-be-suitor.

~I'm free! But about dinner - If it's ok with you I think I'd prefer somewhere quiet and low key. Maybe you could come over to mine and I will make gumbo or something?

Will winced the moment he sent it. Gumbo was pretty much a go to dish for him, easy and just how Aunt Bella taught him. But seeing it written out in a text to some fancy alpha with expensive tastes, it felt ridiculous. He just wanted to feel comfortable and private, and wanted Hannibal to feel the same. And... he couldn't deny that dining privately, he hoped, could lead to more if Hannibal decided to take the brakes off.

~That sounds delightful. I would like to take you up on that sometime. This occasion however, if you are resistant to a restaurant, perhaps I could cook for you? After all I invited you to dinner, it would be unfair of me to then expect you to cook.

Not only was it a fair point, Will found the text made him smile. There was often that gender expectation on omegas, especially female omegas, of their *place in the home*. He'd had lovers and flings before who had very casually expected adherence to gender roles that Will considered outdated for anyone, let alone himself.

The alpha insisting he cook for Will warmed him - taking that supposed omegan duty from Will at the same time as affirming the genuine interest in him. Showing that he was an alpha who could provide by actually - literally - putting the food on the table himself.

~Sounds great. Friday at 8pm?

~I look forward to it.

Will put his phone away and threw the remnants of his sandwich into the trash can next to his desk, not realising he was beaming from ear to ear until his face started to damn well ache.

*

Hannibal greeted him at the door with a wide and welcoming smile.

"Please, come in." Hannibal ushered him through. He was wearing his usual, as far as Will could tell, sort of ensemble of smart shirt with a garishly patterned vest and pants that he somehow managed to work despite how over the top the print seemed.

He walked Will passed the dining room and into the kitchen before pulling out a chair for him at the breakfast bar there.

"I thought... the dining room is very large and pretentious and not at all intimate. I thought you might prefer if we dined in here." Hannibal sounded almost uncertain as he said it, as though apologising for the dining room.

Will smiled. "Here is great."

He took a seat and shrugged out of his jacket, which Hannibal quickly came and took from him, clearly flustered at what he likely saw as being remiss in his hosting.

"Are you nervous?" Will chuckled, enjoying the way he flustered the cool alpha in person despite how close they had become over the phone.

Hannibal cleared his throat and hung Will's jacket on the back of his chair, though Will could tell he was itching to go and hang it somewhere more appropriate - a cloakroom or something. He seemed to be making a great effort to seem casual and Will was flattered to think he was making that effort for him.

"I take great pride in my cooking, it is another passion of mine. I think it's fair to say that I... am in nervous anticipation of your, I hope, enjoyment." Hannibal crooned the words.

"I'm sure I'll love it." Will answered, feeling Hannibal standing so close behind him that he just wanted to turn and pull the alpha to him.

Despite his initial uncertainty, the evening at the flower shop had put pay to any doubts he had that he might not want this. He liked Hannibal and felt something there - something that could be the kind of connection he'd started to assume he would never have with anyone.

Maybe Hannibal sensed the desire, as he then moved quickly back to the other side of the counter.

Describing the food to Will as he poured a glass of red wine and setting it in front of him before one for himself and toasting.

Will picked up his glass and clinked it against Hannibal's with a smile. They both sipped, looking over the rims at each other before Hannibal broke the contact and set about putting the finishing touches to the half plated meal.

"Do you have to work tomorrow?" Hannibal asked casually as he set the food out.

"No, thankfully. That's why I thought tonight would be good, no early morning to consider." Will realised as soon as the words were out of his mouth that it could be considered presumptive. And there was no way he could deny that he was ecstatic that he was free to stay late... or even stay over. He wasn't sure if he should feel the need to hide that or not.

Hannibal merely smiled and served the food.

*

The meal was undeniably delicious, though not so delicious as the appreciative noises Will made as he ate. With each little sound, Hannibal wanted all the more to kiss Will again, remembering the taste of the omega on his tongue.

"What do you enjoy doing after dinner Will?" Hannibal asked him, wanting to make the omega as comfortable as possible and show that he had an interest in providing that comfort. He had never thought to court anyone before, but Hannibal's upbringing had been rigid and traditional - he had taken preparatory classes for alphas that taught exactly this kind of thing.

"I uh... Never really thought about it. My meal times can kinda be all over the place depending on what's going on at work." Will shrugged and looked a little put on the spot, making Hannibal consider that perhaps his traditional courting might be off the mark. "If... if you mean hobbies..." Will continued, clearly trying to rescue the topic. "Like I said before - fishing, I make my own lures. Which I find relaxing, so that's something I often do to unwind. I walk my dogs. They actually stay with my neighbour a lot of the time, because of my shifts. So it's nice to chill with them." He shrugged.

"You enjoy outdoor pursuits." Hannibal nodded and smiled.

"I guess. I think I just enjoy solitary pursuits. It's nice to have time alone, decompress from the day. Get away from people." Will said thoughtfully and then looked uncertainly at Hannibal. "Not that I don't like being here, or spending time with you. I..."

"Please, Will it's quite alright, I understand your meaning." Hannibal replied with a gentle smile, hoping he really did understand. So he ventured - "Would you ever be amenable to someone joining you for fishing or dog walking?"

Will frowned for a moment, thoughtful. "Well, I guess it would kind of defeat the whole *time alone* thing but..." He looked at Hannibal then, realising that what he said might not be what Hannibal wanted to hear. "I... I mean..."

Hannibal chuckled. "Will, I realised the first moment I met you that you are not someone who would let people close easily, and yet..." He placed his hand over one of Will's and felt rewarded when the man didn't draw back.

Will's smile was there, not forced but not full.

"You're finding this difficult. Am I being too forward?" Hannibal asked, slowly withdrawing his hand. He wasn't sure there was a way to go even slower than he already was.

Will's frown was full of confusion and uncertainty. He shook his head. "Hannibal.. I..."

Will grabbed Hannibal's hand and pulled him back, almost using him as balance as he leaned over the narrow counter and pressed his lips to the alpha's. Hannibal drew back sharply.

"I don't want you to feel as if you-"

"Hannibal, for crying out loud!" Will raised his voice and dropped back into his seat. "If you don't want to sleep with me, just... don't lie to me. Don't lead me on. I get you want to take it slow but surely kissing..."

Hannibal moved off his stool and around the counter to Will's side.

"Would you be amenable to that? And no more?"

Will laughed. "Well, when you ask so formally, how could I refuse?"

Hannibal took Will's hand then, comforted when the omega closed his finger's around Hannibal's and allowed himself to be lead to the study. Hannibal settled Will into the grand and overstuffed leather sofa before setting some music and grabbing two tumblers and a decanter of whiskey from the small bar.

Hannibal handed Will a glass of whiskey and then sat beside him, close so that their bodies slotted perfectly against each other - so very perfectly.

It was a warm comfort that they both sank into. Hannibal placed a hand on Will's arm and stroked it, grazing over the dusting of hair there.

Will chuckled - "This house is something else. Feels like I'm a child sneaking around in an adult's house. This study..." Will surveyed the room with a disbelieving smile. "We have... very different tastes."

“I like your taste.” Hannibal crooned and licked his lips, enjoying how Will rolled his eyes at the ridiculous comment. “I still want to take it slow Will, but...”

He slid his hand to the back of Will’s neck and pulled him forward until their breaths mingled.

“I’m okay with that.” Will responded, breathless.

*

Will woke aching. He tried to stretch but found himself trapped, pinned.

It took a moment for him to realise that the weight against him was Hannibal. He blinked his eyes open and took in his situation. They must have fallen asleep at some point and now they were half reclined on the sofa - Hannibal laying almost over him.

He remembered kissing, drinking, talking and laughing. He’d stripped Hannibal of his vest and tie, kissed him again. It was so intimate and erotic, he’d been so painfully aroused, but they didn’t go any further and that had almost been overwhelming.

Not on a physical level, but emotionally - going so far but not far enough, on the brink. On the edge of a cliff waiting to go over. And the whole while Hannibal’s intentions were completely clear - he wanted to really demonstrate something by taking it slow. Hold back his desire in order to show how truly strong that desire was. It was worshipful. The way he kissed and lightly touched Will had been worshipful.

Will swallowed, the alpha stirring a little, nuzzling against him further and he could imagine so many days waking like this that it hurt.

It was too much.

It was everything he could have possibly imagined but never thought he would have. It was clear that Hannibal was courting him, a traditional wooing of alpha and omega. An exploration of their compatibility to discover whether they could be more. Whether they could be bonded. Conjoined.

Will couldn’t help the shuddering breath that left his body. Hannibal wanted to know him better and find whether he was the omega he would like to bond with. Seal their relationship in a way that so few did anymore. And... Will realised he wanted that too.

The thought terrified him.

Taking it slow made it so difficult. He needed to know that Hannibal would still want that, still worship him, after they had become physical. The thought of getting as close as they had only for Hannibal to reject him once they were both naked. Despite Hannibal’s protestations that that wouldn’t happen, Will had had plenty of experience to the contrary. But he had never been invested in those occasions, not like he was now. Not like he was with Hannibal.

The thought of this all ending was so overwhelming painful that Will scrambled from the sofa, having to push Hannibal aside to do so, which woke the alpha with a start.

“Will?” Hannibal questioned, his concern clear.

“I, uh... I have to go.” Will forced out the words, unsure of what else to say. He could hardly tell the man that not sleeping together was wringing out all his insecurities. How could he say something that might make Hannibal feel like they had to have sex when he was clearly set on taking it slow?

No dalliance he'd had previously remotely prepared him for the idea of someone wanting him so completely that they were considering a bond. The thought of that alpha then rejecting his body was too difficult to even comprehend. The idea numbed him so thoroughly that Hannibal's words of protest as he grabbed his jacket and left, sounded as though they were spoken from miles away.

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Will isn't feeling so good and the temptation to call Hannibal is really strong...

~Will, I understand you may not want to talk with me right now. I apologise for whatever I might have done to upset you and hope that you'll talk to me when you feel ready.

Will dropped his phone back onto the bed, rolling over and burrowing himself further into the covers. Why did Hannibal have to be so damn considerate?

He'd read the message so many times over the last two weeks.

Hannibal had sent it a few hours after he'd ran out of the alpha's house and he still had no idea what the hell to do about it.

He liked Hannibal a lot, and he missed talking with him. Missed his scent, his smile, his stupid puns.

Will groaned and rolled onto his back. It didn't help that he had been feeling rough the last few days, to the point where he'd gotten in from his shift the previous day and fell straight into bed. Maybe part of it was knowing that he had a day off so could just sleep and wallow if he wanted to.

He must have drifted off to sleep because it was his phone beeping that woke him up.

Will groped around in his covers until he found his phone and let his eyes focus in on the new message. From Bev.

~Are you okay? You didn't get back to me.

Will frowned and checked back, realising that the message was the second from Bev, the first was sent the day before asking if he wanted to meet for a drink when she got off shift. She'd been doing that a lot lately. He hadn't told her much about what had happened with Hannibal, only that he was cooling it. He wasn't sure how to explain that Hannibal needed to take things slow and that was tearing Will apart. What kind of asshole would that make him?

He grabbed the glass of water next to his bed and chugged it, feeling gross and sweaty and knowing the he needed a shower. But his skin hurt, he felt fluey and maybe he really was coming down with something.

His hands felt heavy as he tapped a reply to Bev.

~Sorry, not feeling so good. Might have to call in tomorrow.

~Shit. Must be serious then. You want me to bring you anything? Take the dogs?

~I'm fine. But thank you. The dogs were with Margot, so I left them. Already told her I was sick, she's fine to keep them a while.

~Ok, well as soon as you're better you're taking me to dinner. Don't think I don't know this is a ploy as it's your turn to pay!

Will huffed and dropped his phone back into the covers again. Even the thought of dinner with someone made him think about never having dinner with Hannibal again.

Maybe he was just being an idiot over this whole thing? Maybe he should have just talked to Hannibal, explained his own feelings about going slow, instead of running away? Maybe he should have explained why that was hard for him and why he had freaked out at the thought of how serious all this was? Perhaps there was a way to say it without making Hannibal feel pressured into having sex sooner than he was ready?

Will shuddered, feeling light headed and a little delirious. Thoughts of talking to Hannibal, apologising, reversing time, filled his mind as he drifted back to sleep.

*

Will woke shivering. Despite having thrown off his bed covers, and even feeling the chill along his skin, he was burning up. The bed was soaked through with sweat, his body drenched. Everything was on fire. When he moved the friction pulled a groan from him - not just the discomfort of his raw feeling skin against the sheets, but also the rubbing of his thighs together igniting an ache within him. He slowly realised that the wetness between his legs was slick as much as it was sweat. His cock throbbed - he wasn't able to get erect naturally like a cis male, but it didn't stop the arousal making itself known.

This couldn't be happening. He had hadn't had a heat in years, he'd been on suppressants almost continually since puberty, as a lot of omegas did. He didn't mind having heats, it was more the practical side - sad but true that he likely wouldn't have made detective so fast, or at all, had he had to take heat leave every few months. The only time he'd ever come off his suppressants was when he'd first started hormone therapy, and that was until his levels had settled and they were able to find the right balance for him.

Will's jaw tightened as realisation dawned. Work had been crazy, he'd missed his last review with his consultant - having had to reschedule his blood work. He was supposed to do this every few months, make sure his levels still worked out, that he didn't need his hormones or his suppressants adjusting. Which apparently he did.

Fuck.

Will rolled out of the bed, feeling like his bones were shattering under his skin - like over baked clay. He stumbled to the living room and pulled open his desk drawer, finding the number for his consultant and grabbing the landline phone sat there.

It rang a few times before Brian, the receptionist answered with a friendly greeting. Will cut him off -

"It's Will Graham." He managed to struggle the words out, feeling his body shaking uncontrollably as he leaned heavily against the desk.

"Detective Graham, how are you? How can I help today?" Brian Zeller, pleasant as ever sounded a little concerned - perhaps picking up the tremor in Will's voice.

"I'm in heat. Is Doctor Price available?"

"He's in a consultation right now, I will go talk with him. Are you sitting down? If you feel up to it eat something, get some water, try not to walk around a lot. Sudden heats from low suppressants can leave you light headed. I'll be back in one moment Will." Brian put him on hold and Will sank to the floor next to the desk. Jimmy Price had been his consultant for years, Brian knew his medical needs and records as much as he needed to and they always were familial. It gave him some relief and reassurance, knowing they would be there to help him.

A thought of Hannibal flashed to his mind - that the alpha would be there to help him too, if he just asked, he was sure. Even as he shook the thought away he felt the swell of slick between his legs and another wave of heat through his body. The idea of Hannibal helping him through his heat made him whine.

"Will, are you there?"

He hadn't realised he'd let the phone fall into his lap. He picked it up when he heard Brian's voice.

"I'm here. I don't feel so good."

"I've talked to Doctor Price, he's going to get a prescription delivered out to you - without blood tests he can't give any kind of emergency suppressants as he doesn't know how it will interact with your hormones. But this should take the edge off - help with the heat sickness you're experiencing - nausea, fainting things like that. The courier should be there within the hour. But... Will, do you have... I can give you the number of a service? Or there is a heat clinic in the city that can take emergency cases if they have the space."

Will didn't reply. He wasn't sure what he had expected - maybe for Doctor Price to wave a magic wand and have this all stop? But the medication sounded good, sounded like it would help and he could understand Price being unable to do more. But that still left him in heat and really the only way to make a heat not as unpleasant as entirely possible was to make it as pleasurable as possible.

"I have toys." Will finally replied and he was sure he could hear Brian sigh with relief. Brian was one of the few male omegas Will knew, though he was cis, and he appreciated the concern from him.

“I’m going to send you an email now with details of local services that can send someone out to you, and that clinic I mentioned. Should you need it. Given that this is an emergency, it should all be covered on your health insurance, so don’t hesitate over it at all Will, okay? I will get out some emergency birth control to you too, take it just in case you decide to use a service or clinic, okay? If you can’t get through this on your own then call someone. If you need me to call them for you then you just say the word.”

Will was nodding even though he knew Brian couldn’t see him doing so. Finally he managed - “Thanks.”

He must have blacked out for a few moments because he opened his eyes expecting to be in bed, before realising he was still slumped against the desk, phone in hand. He looked at it intently for a moment before understanding that it wasn’t his cell phone.

This heat was boiling his brain.

Will managed to pull himself up against the desk until he was standing again, placing the phone down there before staggering back to his room. When he slumped into bed he felt his cell phone digging into him and pulled it out. He had it in his hand, holding it in front of his face and trying to focus on it - he could see an email notification from Brian, some messages.

He closed his eyes and drifted off again. His dreams were filled with images of him calling Hannibal to apologise, promising to reverse time.

*

The loud banging at the door woke Will with a start. He fell out of the bed, wrapped in soaked bed sheets, as he tried to get to the door. He staggered mindlessly through the rooms, hearing the knock again and not even really understanding it, just moving on autopilot.

He flipped the catch and opened the door.

There was an alien standing in front of him - big black, bulbous head - and it was holding out a package.

Will blinked, the sight in front of him swimming and making him feel sick. He slumped against the door frame.

“Are you okay fella?” It wasn’t an alien anymore, a man - he’d flipped up the visor on the helmet and was looking at Will with concern. “You need me to call Doctor Price’s office for you?”

Will shook his head and grabbed the package more roughly than intended.

“Okay, well... Zeller trusts me to do these deliveries right so...” he removed his helmet and set it by the door before moving to Will and taking his weight. “Just gonna get you settled, make sure you take the meds, okay?”

Will could barely protest even if he wanted to. He didn’t know who this kid was, but Brian had sent him and he smelled vaguely of alpha over a beta scent. He wasn’t alpha, Will was

sure, but the scent lingered - perhaps from a previous delivery - and it split Will in two.

It made him long for Hannibal and the alpha scent he had become so accustomed to. But it also heightened his arousal and his desperate physical need. He let out an involuntary whine.

“Shit, sorry man.” The kid knew the issue immediately and looked contrite. He lowered Will to the sofa and moved to the kitchen, opening the cupboards until he found a glass and filled it with tap water. “My last delivery - he’s an alpha. Shit.”

He handed Will the water and then took the package back from him, keeping as much of a distance as he could whilst he opened it and the pill bottle within before placing two pills in Will’s hand.

“Take these. I’m going to leave the rest here, okay. That big one is the birth control, the other is for the sickness.” He placed the bottle on the kitchen counter. “You should start to feel better in an hour or so, but take more of the sickness pills. Brian always says to say that - once you start to feel better you still need to keep taking them otherwise you’ll feel like shit again, okay?”

Will was nodding, trying to swallow the pills and draining the whole glass of water. He passed it back to the kid who dutifully refilled it and brought it back. He handed it to Will with another apologetic look.

“I’m really sorry, about the scent. You need me to help you get changed or showered or something? I’m a registered care assistant if you want to see my badge?”

Will shook his head, and the boy nodded, looking as though he had something more to say, which he finally did when he got to the front door and turned back to him.

“Please don’t tell Brian or Doctor Price about the scent, I need this job. I shouldn’t have messed up like that... sorry if it has made you... uncomfortable.”

Will waved his hand dismissively and nodded as the kid grabbed his helmet and left, closing the door behind him.

Will lay his head back on the sofa, trying not to breath in the lingering alpha scent. Maybe he should open some windows and have a shower? As soon as the pills started to kick in. In the meantime his body rolled with flushes of heat over his skin and all through his insides. His body wanting an alpha. Needing one.

He let his eyes flutter shut again. Once the pills kicked in he’d go back to bed and find one of his toys to knot himself on.

*

Hannibal surveyed the area as he pulled up his car. The directions Will had messaged him had been garbled. But along with the apology and request for help, and then the lack of response when Hannibal tried to call him to see if everything was ok, Hannibal was determined to find the place.

His satnav couldn't make any more sense of the directions than he could, but he was in the right area, he was sure. Finally he saw a mailbox on the street with "Graham" written on the side. It was at the top of a lane which he turned down and continued along until he came to a house.

When he stepped out of the car he knew immediately this was Will's home. The outdoorsy tinge to his natural scent was revealed to Hannibal the moment he breathed in. It filled him with comfort and also - hope. Will's text seemed almost like he were drunk or unwell and when he didn't reply there was no chance that Hannibal would just leave it at that.

Drunk or not, if Will sent him a message saying he needed his help, then he was going to provide any assistance he could.

Hannibal stepped up to the veranda and knocked on the door. There was no answer and he knocked again a couple of times before trying the door. It was unlocked so he pushed it open slowly, quietly before calling gently inside -

"Will? It's Hannibal, are you alright?" He stepped into the house cautiously. But his feeling of intrusion evaporated the instant he scented a very faint lingering of alpha and the more headily pungent scent of an omega in heat.

Hannibal's whole body stiffened, every muscle clenching in anger and frustration.

Will was in heat and another alpha had been here to help.

Whatever he had done to scare Will off had meant that Will had called on someone else instead of him. Perhaps his heat-addled brain had him messaging Hannibal incorrectly, or as a last resort. But someone else had been here to assist.

The thought made him feel sick, not helped by the stab of pain through his chest. Of course Will would have sought someone other than him if he thought Hannibal would merely reject him in favour of maintaining the distance he'd insisted upon.

With plenty of time to reflect upon it, he had realised that perhaps his intentions had been too overwhelming for Will. It had been so obvious that he wanted to court Will, and he was sure Will had been receptive - to a point. It had occurred to him since last seeing Will that taking it as slow as he had might have crossed the line from seeming respectful and seeming a lack of interest. Either way he was sure the key lay in communication, well Will was ready.

And now it was too late.

Despite the pounding of blood in his ears, Hannibal could make out the sound of a shower coming from somewhere further back. Perhaps Will cleaning up now that the alpha had left?

He was about to turn and leave when he heard a clattering and then a thud - the sound of a heavy body crashing to the floor. Without further thought Hannibal rushed towards the sound, ripping open the bathroom door so that it barely stayed on its hinges.

He wasn't sure what he had expected, he only knew that Will might need him.

Will was slumped on the floor, wrapped in the shower curtain that had come down with the pole now on the floor next to him. His eyes were rolling as though he were trying to remain conscious.

“Will!” Hannibal went immediately to his side, pulling him to a seated position against his chest as he grabbed a towel from the rack next to him. Will was hot, red hot as though his skin was about to catch fire. If an alpha had come to help with his heat, he hadn’t done a sufficient job.

“Will, are you alright?” Hannibal ran his hands lightly and carefully over Will’s skin, reaching all he could from where he sat, to see if there were any breaks. There were a few bruises that would be angry in a few days, but he otherwise seemed fine.

“Alpha.” Will’s whine was pitiful as he leaned into Hannibal’s touch.

His own instincts made sure his cock filled at the word and how it was uttered, but he kept his head and started to steadily stand Will up. The omega’s eyelids were drooping and he winced with every movement as the shower curtain fell away. Hannibal carefully wrapped the towel around his waist and started to try and guide him from the bathroom. When it was clear that each step was torture, Hannibal lifted Will into his arms and carried him out of the steam filled room.

Hannibal followed the scent of Will’s sweat and heat to the bedroom and frowned as he laid Will on the bed. It was a mess, he must have been in bed for days with no one to care for him. The thought roiled his anger again, he shouldn’t have scared Will off. He should have been there.

Once Will was settled against pillows his eyes closed. After a moment he was out cold and Hannibal took the chance to take a breath. To let out a heavy sigh. Will let out an unconscious answering whine that pulled at everything within Hannibal.

The alpha grit his teeth and left the room. He returned first to the bathroom, turning off the shower before hoisting the curtain back up. It was intact, the pole having come away when Will had undoubtedly passed out. He removed his jacket, vest and tie - placing them on the towel shelf before rolling up his sleeves. It didn’t take much to slot the pole back into place, curtain and all. He grabbed a couple more towels from the rack and used them to mop up the floor before placing them in the bathtub. He’d take care of it all later, once Will was better.

The immediate mess cleared, Will was his priority. Back in the hallway he located the airing cupboard and took out two lots of fresh bed sheets and blankets. He would change the sheets now to make Will more comfortable, but have more ready if they were needed, or when Will’s heat ended - whichever came first.

He placed them on the sofa and went to the kitchen, finding a jug in a cupboard and giving it a thorough wash out of the dust within, before filling it with water. He found frozen lemon slices in Will’s freezer and added those before collecting two glasses to take to the bedroom. He was about to start back when he saw the pill bottle on the side.

Hannibal was not specialised at all in endocrinology, but that wasn't required to recognise the medication as a very strong anti-sickness drug. It was commonly used for severe morning sickness, and heat sickness.

They had not known each other long enough for Hannibal to make any kind of guess about whether or not Will was on suppressants, though he might have assumed he was given the demands of his job. For whatever reason, they had now failed and left Will experiencing a surprise heat with no provisions or assistance. Heat sickness was common in such situations.

Hannibal couldn't help the image that came to mind then of knotting the omega, but he shook it away. He had never been one to let his alpha instincts dictate his behaviours. He picked up the pill bottle and continued with the jug and glasses, and sheets into the bedroom, placing them all on Will's bedside table.

Will had not moved a muscle, but there was now a light sheen of sweat over his forehead and chest.

Hannibal watched him for a moment, studying the rise and fall of his chest until he was satisfied with the easy, if shallow breathing. For a moment his eyes went to the scars on Will's chest before chiding himself and looking away. Will likely hadn't even registered his presence, it was intrusive for him to take advantage of Will's nudity.

Hannibal busied himself with the sheets, changing them as he had many times when he had first interned during his medical studies. He pulled the dirty sheets up on one half of the bed, before placing the clean - moving Will gently to the clean side before repeating the procedure. He placed a light and clean blanket over Will's legs and plumped the pillows a little before pouring out the two glasses of lemon water - both for Will should he need them and be unable to refill one himself.

Hannibal lingered at the door when he was done, studying Will's exquisite face framed by damp curls. There was nothing quite as beautiful as an omega in heat, and Will's beauty was almost painful.

He opened the window to let in some air and then left the room, door slightly ajar, before taking up a book from Will's shelves - fly fishing - and settling into the armchair.

*

When Will woke up he felt simultaneously better and worse.

The sickness felt eased, but there was a strong scent of alpha that was making his blood thrum. He saw the pills and water next to the bed, taking two more before realising he had no idea how they got there or how he got into bed. The last thing he could remember was feeling well enough to have a shower and then - did he pass out? He frowned.

He was trying to focus on what had happened, trying to remember, when focus evaporated completely. He made the realisation as he tried and failed to concentrate, that his heat proper was descending. The sickness had passed and now he was really going into heat.

And all he could smell around him was the alpha scent driving him mad. It wasn't the scent from before that had lingered on the beta delivery boy. This was fresh and strong, and it smelled like Hannibal.

Will let out a low moan at the realisation and knew then that his mind was playing tricks on him. The temptation to call or message the alpha was strong, but he couldn't do that - he'd run out on the man with no explanation and then ignored his message, like an idiot. There was no way Hannibal would be remotely interested in him now.

He rolled in the bed and the sheets sent up another plume of scent that had slick pulsing out of him. He squeezed his thighs together and imagined Hannibal knotting him, making him moan into the pillow. Before he knew it he'd twisted so he was on his knees, the towel falling from his waist as he pushed three fingers into himself and moaned at the instant relief.

He worked his fingers for the five minutes it took for the relief to ebb. His body craving more as he panted and sweated. The sensitive skin of his cock dragged against the sheets beneath him intermittently, so Will took a moment to adjust himself - bending his cock into an erect position so that the friction was more pleasurable.

Will was four fingers deep when he realised the futility of his actions - he needed a knot. It took him a couple of minutes of grunting and thrusting back on his own hand before he managed to pull himself away from the little relief that was giving him, in order to locate his knotting dildo.

He used it rarely so the box was at the back of his wardrobe, which felt a million miles from the alpha scented sheets of the freshly made bed.

Will started to extricate himself from the towel and blankets wrapped around his feet, and was about to step from the bed when the realisation cut through the haze of his heat -

Freshly made bed?

He lost his footing and balance as he realised that someone had in fact been in his house. An alpha? Hannibal?

Will fell to the floor with a thud, one leg still caught up in the blankets attaching him to the bed.

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

A very happy ending

Chapter Notes

A shout out to @Mrsundance whose fic [Guns in the Summertime](#) (one of my faves), inspired a scene in this chapter.

Hannibal had heard Will wake.

When the omega had clearly started to pleasure himself, Hannibal considered leaving. At the least this was intrusive and he didn't want to offend Will in anyway, but he was still concerned. Even if the heat sickness had passed, being in heat was a vulnerable time and if Will was even marginally still sick then there was a risk.

Hannibal couldn't help but consider what had happened with the shower - what if he hadn't been around? What if something worse happened?

He could almost handle the thought of not being with Will Graham if that was how things were to be, but to lose the omega altogether? For some calamity to befall him at this vulnerable time? Hannibal couldn't bear it. He had sat for sometime going back and forth on whether he should at least remove himself to the veranda, tuning out Will's soft moans as well as he could - until they came to an abrupt halt with a heavy thud.

Hannibal was on his feet before he had time to think, racing into the bedroom and pushing the door open so hard that it slammed into the wall.

"Will?" The omega was almost entirely on the floor, his leg caught up in the coverings Hannibal had placed there. He was cursing himself for it as he moved forward, terrified that Will might have hit his head on the bedside table.

When he rounded the bed, he saw Will immobile but safe, face down on the floor. His arms were pillowed beneath him and he had his forehead resting down onto them, breathing steadily and trembling. His body was completely slick with a sheen of sweat and he smelled all the more divine for it.

“Will.” Hannibal breathed his name softly as he went to his side. He didn’t dare touch him, not wanting to cause any discomfort, but crouched next to him. “I’m here Will, do you... Can I help you? Help you back into bed?”

He saw Will wince as he turned his head and looked side on at him, eyes slightly glassy.

“I thought I imagined your scent, but you’re here aren’t you?” Will didn’t look sick anymore, colour had returned to his cheeks - more than returned. He was flush now, his pupils dilated. His body ready and arousal clear from the clean notes of his scent that hit the back of Hannibal’s throat.

“I’m here.” He confirmed needlessly. “Shall I help you back into bed? Were you trying to get something?” He indicated towards the water and could see a whole glass already gone and the pill bottle open.

Will shook his head. “I was trying... I need to get...” He bit his lower lip and flushed even more than he had been before.

Hannibal tried to sound as reassuring as possible. “Will, I was once a medical doctor, please don’t feel embarrassed by the natural needs of your body. If I can help you, it is my duty to do so with no personal-”

“Ok, I get it.” Will replied gruffly before adding. “Thanks.” He held out an arm and Hannibal took hold of him, slowly pulling their bodies together so that he could lift the omega back onto the bed. As he did so Will grabbed at the fabric tangled around him and pulled it up. It was a jerky movement and Hannibal was considerate in looking away whilst Will pulled and repositioned until he was covered.

Will lay back on the pillows and Hannibal sat next to him on the bed, resisting the urge to stroke the damp curls from his face.

“What were you trying to get Will?”

Will blushed again and didn’t look at Hannibal as he replied - “knotting dildo. It’s in my wardrobe. But... I’m feeling better right now.”

Hannibal nodded, he knew it was likely his own alpha scent that was calming Will and the idea brought a more pressing issue to mind.

“Will, I... I scented an alpha here. I stayed to ensure that you were safe and comfortable, but if there is a chance the alpha will return... or do you prefer to only use the toy?”

Will looked at him then, eyes wide. He floundered. “No, I... uh... What? No...”

“There’s no need to be embarrassed Will. I came because of the text you sent me, but I understand if you wish me to leave, and that would be for the best if there is another alpha returning...” The very thought hurt and he trailed off for a moment. He wanted to question why any alpha would leave their omega when they clearly were still in need of them. Even one from a service wouldn’t leave until they were completely sure the heat had passed.

“I’ll get...” Hannibal started again, trying to remember this wasn’t his business. He got up and went to the wardrobe, opening the doors and feeling Will’s eyes bore into his back the whole time.

“You don’t have to... Hannibal I...”

“I hope for my own peace of mind, you will allow me to make sure you are comfortable before I leave...” Hannibal opened the wardrobe but looked back at the sharp whine his words had drawn from Will.

*

The thought of Hannibal leaving broke something within Will - pulled it tight and then snapped it like a rubber band, reverberating around his insides.

The idea of him leaving after having come here to take care of him was so painful.

After Will had pushed him away he still came and still only wanted the best for him, even if that wasn’t the alpha himself. It broke and mended his heart in one moment and the thought of letting Hannibal walk away hurt sharply.

“Don’t go.” He sounded desperate and didn’t care. He reached out a hand and would have gotten off the bed if he wasn’t stopped in his track by the ache running through him. He felt dizzy and was grateful that Hannibal was suddenly there, taking hold of him before he lost his balance. Will took the opportunity to pull Hannibal down until he was over him on the bed. “Please Hannibal... I’m sorry I ran away, I was scared, I was overwhelmed. I know you wanted to take things slow but it was making me insecure. I need you to know who I am physically and that you could still be interested in me once you do.”

Hannibal frowned and shook his head. “Will, darling boy... that was never going to be an issue. I told you so, but... I should have understood that you felt that way. I’m sorry I didn’t gauge this well-”

“I want you.” The words came out on a heavy breath and Will threaded his arms around Hannibal’s neck and drew him close. “I need you.”

“The other alpha... did you call a service?” Hannibal asked, a note in his voice that might have been jealousy even though the trust he had in Will came off him in waves. He clearly would have understood if Will had, but he just wanted to be the only alpha there for him now.

Will shook his head. “Damn delivery kid, came in reeking of his last house call. And... all I could think of was you, even as I scented the other alpha.”

Before Will could add anything further, Hannibal rumbled a growl deep in his throat and took his mouth.

Will’s immediate response was to moan into the kiss, his legs falling open, inviting Hannibal to reposition himself ever so slightly between them. His moan turned into a long groan as he felt Hannibal’s hardness against him.

Will pulled back to take a breath and mutter - "Can we stop taking it slow now?"

"Yes." Hannibal's breathless reply was little more than a hiss as he slotted himself completely against Will.

Just the word made Will's whole body respond. Heat flushing through him and slick swelling between his thighs. He felt light headed again and could feel his heat responding to the alpha who was willing to oblige him.

Hannibal's mouth was close to his ear when he murmured - "I want to help you Will, tell me what you need."

Will half-groaned the reply - "I need your knot."

*

Will's words made Hannibal tremble. He had never wanted anyone more, never wanted before to make anyone his. He knew he had to hold back this time - it was something they could discuss later when Will wasn't driven by his instincts. But the urge to bite Will's neck and create that mating bond that called to him was so strong it was almost undeniable.

Almost.

For the sake of his consideration for Will he wasn't going to force a bond, as much as he wanted it. Instead he would take all that Will would allow him and nothing more. He had been so remiss in thinking he knew what was best - that not getting physical was more respectful when in fact it was the opposite of what Will needed. Now this heat would resolve that. And Hannibal couldn't be more grateful - he didn't even want to consider what might have otherwise happened. How he might have continued to insist that Will didn't need to become physical and not understand his desire to do so was as much a need. He would have unknowingly pushed Will farther from his reach, farther from the bond that was so clearly to be between them.

He continued to kiss Will as deeply and wholly as he could, to try and make clear his intention to be what Will needed, because that was what he needed too.

"Alpha." The word was a small plea against his lips that made Hannibal draw back. He couldn't work his fingers fast or precise enough and his shirt ended up torn as he tried to remove it. Each layer of clothing was a layer keeping him from Will and he couldn't abide it.

Soon Hannibal's clothes were practically in tatters on the floor next to the bed, as he kneeled between Will's legs, panting and brimming with lust. Every muscle was tensed, his cock was hard and leaking and the way Will looked at him with open need made him want to take the omega hard and fast.

But he couldn't. Will needed more than that, he knew. And though the omega was hazy now, his eyes glazed and his expression one of deep desire, Hannibal knew part of him was still lucid. The part that would push him away and ride out the rest of his heat alone if he decided

to reject the alpha at any point in their coupling. It would hurt his pride and break his heart, but he would allow it if Will did so. He could only hope that he didn't.

So it was with gentle hands that Hannibal started to draw down the blanket that Will had placed between them what felt like an eternity ago. As he did so he moved forward, kissing Will lightly even as Will tried to take more with hungry nips. Hannibal ignored the whine that issued forth as he moved away again, sliding down Will's body with the blanket until he reached Will's chest.

He wondered what this might have been like had they been intimate outside of Will's heat for the first time. If Will might have been self conscious or hesitant. He wished they'd had this conversation and that he was thusly forearmed with knowledge of Will's like and dislikes. The things that might make him uncomfortable or even distressed.

As it was he continued to watch Hannibal intently as the alpha propped himself over Will, resting on one elbow as he moved his hand lightly to Will's throat. He ghosted it over Will's skin before trailing down the centre of Will's chest. Each movement brought a heave of Will's chest and a slight arch in his back as he waited for the alpha to please him.

Hannibal hesitated for a moment before lightly running his thumb over the line of scar beneath Will's right pectoral, eliciting a shiver that turned to a jolt of movement as he trailed lightly up to a nipple. Will let out a gasp and ground his hips up in response as Hannibal lowered his mouth to gently lick at the nipple. He drew it into his mouth and sucked it for a moment before drawing back again to gauge Will's reaction. To see if this was something he enjoyed.

Will was panting, his head thrown back and his fists balled in the sheets beneath him. When Hannibal didn't move for a moment he raised his head and met his eyes, a plea there for more. Hannibal moved his attentions to the opposite nipple, this time rewarded with a moan before he began to slide himself and the blanket down further.

He swallowed hard. He had no idea what to expect and the truth was he didn't care. His interests had always been in a person's character and personality not their genitalia - Will's anatomy had no bearing on his desire for the man. His main concern was Will's reaction. If he did anything to make the omega feel unsafe or upset at this point then he knew he risked rejection and the thought of Will suffering his heat alone was more than enough reason not to allow that.

He watched Will intently for any sort of reaction as he kissed down the light dusting of hair from navel to groin, before sliding the blanket down further.

Will's cock was an average size for any male omega, though he had no testes. For male omegas they were defunct anyway, assigned to irrelevance in evolution as much as the appendix. For a trans omega this anatomy made sense - the position of his vagina would have potentially meant a choice between one or the other given that they occupied a slightly different position than those with male omegan sex organs at birth.

Conscious of not wanting to seem as though he was studying Will, Hannibal took him into his mouth with little hesitation. The moments he had spent acquainting himself with Will's

body had been an attempt at guessing what might please the omega sexually - and as he enjoyed Will's low and drawn out groan, he breathed a sigh of relief.

He caressed every part of Will's cock with his tongue, taking it in and learning its shape and texture. Learning the areas and motions that caused Will to thrust up into his willing mouth.

"Alpha..." The whimper was one of encouragement and need. It turned to a deep, long groan as Hannibal slid two fingers inside Will's slick heat. The groan ended in panted, ragged breaths.

Hannibal's cock was throbbing with need, his knot beginning to tighten and ache in anticipation. Even so, he would hold out as long as he needed to, to ensure Will was ready in every sense.

He moved his fingers within Will, sliding them in and out at the same pace as he sucked Will's cock.

"Hannibal!" The word was an admonishment snapped that startled Hannibal. He pulled back and Will's cock dropped from his mouth as he met Will's glare. "Fuck me." Will ordered, near lucid in his need.

Hannibal couldn't help the chuckle, loving that even in his heat Will was belligerent. Loving that about Will... loving Will...

He shivered.

Will's head fell back once more and Hannibal wasted no time in crawling back up his body, nuzzling at the omega's throat as he settled between his legs. Will hummed his pleasure and writhed beneath him, their bodies aligning with little effort until Hannibal could feel Will's cock curved up between them and his own pressing beneath it.

The slick that moistened Will down to his thighs guided Hannibal's cock as he pushed forward.

Hannibal let out a long breath as he slid slowly into Will, every nerve in his body tingling and vibrating in unison with Will's soft moan. Every urge within him sought to make Will his, to thrust deep and fast and push his knot into the soft and welcoming flesh. To sink his teeth into his neck and bond. But he held himself back even as he trembled above Will.

"Alpha..." Will pleaded. "More..."

Then Hannibal began to move, a slow and deep thrust that drew sounds from Will that were exquisitely pleasant to Hannibal's ear.

"Will." He breathed the omega's name softly and closed his eyes at the answering whimper as he picked up the pace. He rocked into Will, staying deep so that his knot almost caught each time. Will's moans grew deeper and less delicate. His searching fingers dug into Hannibal's back as he clutched at him with sheer need. Before long Will was clawing at him, as though trying to bring him deeper.

Will's legs and arms clutched around Hannibal, and he pulled the alpha so tight to him that Hannibal could hardly move. He was nuzzling into Hannibal's neck and with each graze of Will's teeth, Hannibal felt his knot throb.

Soon Hannibal was fucking into him as hard as he could given their tight coupling - loud grunts and groans were issuing from Will, interspersed with pleas for *harder, faster, fuck me, fill me*. It had Hannibal shaking with his own need.

He kept his thrusts shallow, pushing a little deeper with each one until Will's welcoming heat was enveloping ever more of his knot. Hannibal slammed the final thrust to ensure he was buried to the hilt. The last push - will expanding around him and then swallowing his knot - had the omega crying out with a mixed pain and pleasure. He felt Will's entire body go rigid and then shake for a moment as his muscles tightened around Hannibal's cock.

Hannibal's cry was just as sharp, his knot squeezed with a pulsating rhythm that drew up his balls and made his hips jerk as he spilled his seed inside the omega.

"Hannibal..." Will sighed his name and he felt the omega nestle into him, exhausted as he fell into a contented sleep.

"Will... my omega..." Hannibal whispered, rolling them to their sides, legs tangled together as they remained tied whilst he drifted into sleep too.

*

When Will woke, he felt strangely alone. The space behind him where Hannibal had been spooned against him for countless hours, was empty. He had started to feel more himself again during the night. He wasn't even sure what night it was - perhaps the second or third since Hannibal had arrived. Time was a blur even if he remembered each and every delicious knotting through a hazy fog. Hannibal had met his every need, and done so with tender care.

The memory of the alpha gently caressing him, spending what must have been hours all told, exploring Will's body and worshipping him, filled Will with warmth. Laying kisses along every scar and finding every sensitive place that Will liked to be touched. Will felt not only full when he was knotted, but complete - they had blurred together in a perfect mating. He had even felt the urge to ask Hannibal to bond with him in the heights of his heat, but managed to hold back. Even so the idea of it, the possibility for the future, didn't terrify him.

He knew, despite the empty bed, Hannibal could not have left. Despite any insecurities he might have had in the past, he knew with absolute certainty that Hannibal was still there. Would be there as long as Will allowed it.

Before he could roll over in search of the alpha, he realised he was standing by the wardrobe wearing a pair of Will's pyjama bottoms, the door still hanging open from when Hannibal had gone in search of his dildo.

"Hannibal?"

The alpha turned and smiled, clearly delighted to see him awake.

“My apologies, I was curious... I noticed them hanging here.” He pointed at Will’s uniforms. A couple of regular uniforms, his dress uniform and then behind them a smaller uniform.

"Oh." Will smiled his surprise. "Yeah... I don't wear one much on the job now." Will pointed from the bed, indicating the line of them. "Duty uniform, dress uniform and...uh...." He faltered.

Hannibal frowned and looked at the wardrobe, pushing the clothes back along the rail until he got to the final, much smaller uniform. A uniform cut for a woman's shape.

“That one is from when I first joined the force, before I transitioned.” Will managed, nerves giving way to something else. Not quite pride, but a confidence to be himself in front of Hannibal.

“You’re remarkable.” Hannibal’s words are spoken reverently in the direction of the uniform, and Will can’t help but chuckle and shake his head.

“No more so than anyone else. I just... I had to do what I needed to, to live.”

Will watched as Hannibal raised a hand and brushed his fingers lightly across the uniforms.

"Hannibal, do you have a uniform kink?" Will asked with a grin.

Hannibal's smile was salacious. "I didn't until I met you."

Will felt himself redden, the blush covering his chest and face. Hannibal's smile made his heart flutter and he suddenly found himself wondering if the alpha was ok with what had happened.

This had all been so easy and casual that it hadn't occurred to him that this might be awkward. He had never once considered that his first time with Hannibal would be the alpha's impromptu arrival to see him through his heat. In truth, at some point he'd started to think there would never be a first time of any kind with Hannibal, and now here they were.

“Hannibal.” Will held out his hand and the alpha took it, allowing himself to be pulled back down onto the bed. And that was enough to reassure him completely. He lay half over Will, smiling as he stroked a finger over Will’s scent gland.

“Perhaps you can dress up for me one day?” Hannibal teased.

Will chuckled. “Yeah? Maybe... Would you let me pull my weapon on you?” He joked.

Will’s breath caught when Hannibal cupped his cock and rumbled. “I’d be at your mercy, Detective.”

Will shuddered and swallowed hard. His nod was slow and his smile cocky. “You sure would be.”

Hannibal growled then and kissed him.

Will's hands went into Hannibal's hair, savouring his mouth until the moment was broken by the loud rumbling of Will's angry stomach.

They both laughed lightly and parted, Hannibal running a hand lightly over his stomach and up to his chest - intimate and tender but not sexual.

"I woke earlier and have already prepared some breakfast in anticipation of your hunger." Hannibal's low voice rumbled and Will trembled under the movement of his hand as he nodded.

"Starving." Will agreed. Hannibal placed a chaste kiss on his lips and then took his hand, leading him gently from the bed and to the bathroom. Will was unsure whether to invite Hannibal into the shower with him, as desperately as he wanted to. But he was pretty sure it would result in more sex and he was a little sore, if satisfied.

Will showered quickly, dried and put on some pyjama bottoms. All the while he marvelled at how good this all felt. He wasn't overwhelmed, as he thought he might be. His mind drifted to the flashes of heat sex he could remember. It was all a little foggy from his heat, but also just... it had been perfect. He had felt worshipped and adored. Hannibal had seen him, touched him, and not been repulsed. Quite the opposite. He had been cherished.

Will found his step quickening to get back to the alpha's company. He stopped when the kitchen table came into view - overladen with delights.

"There's a selection of fruit and meat on the table. I hope you don't mind I used some of the items from your fridge, but others I had delivered whilst you were still sleeping." Hannibal indicated the spread on the kitchen table that Will generally used as a desk rather than for dining.

Will nodded numbly, startled by the effort.

The table of food looked amazing and his mouth watered.

"I'll just finish cutting these bread rolls and bring them over." Hannibal said. Will nodded again taking in the strange combinations on the table - the sort of fancy dining the alpha was accustomed to and his own more rustic and simple items added in - including apples from the trees out back. It looked so simple to blend their lives together in this way.

As Hannibal came over with the buttered, crusty rolls, Will's eyes moved to the table centrepiece. Arranged in a little china jug that Will had had unused on his shelf for as long as he could remember was a stunning arrangement of wildflowers. Each a perfect compliment to the other and all vibrant and beautiful.

"Are... are those flowers from my woods?" Will asked.

"Even your wild flowers can be tamed with the right skills, Will." Hannibal's tone made clear he was grinning.

Hannibal moved behind him and Will jumped as the alpha slid his hands around his waist and pulled him back against his chest. When Will froze in surprise Hannibal loosened his embrace and seemed as though he was about to move back.

"Sorry Will, this is all very presumptive of me."

Will grabbed his hands and held him in place, allowing himself to relax back into the hold. "no, please... presume away." Will chuckled.

He felt Hannibal sigh his relief before the alpha nuzzled into the side of his neck - ghosting his lips over the area where he might one day sink his teeth into a mating bite and bond them forever. Will felt a swell in his chest and a desperate need for that to happen. He knew why it had scared him, and he knew what he had needed, and Hannibal had given that to him now. That physical reassurance he shouldn't have needed, but that his experience had made necessary.

He let out his own sigh, realising that there was nothing holding him back now.

He turned in Hannibal's arms, pressing his lips to the alpha's. He whispered against them -

"I hope you're done taking it slow Hannibal, because I certainly am."

Will swallowed Hannibal's answering moan of pleased approval into a deep, languid kiss.

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